

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are currently pending. A final Office Action, dated July 25, 2006, has rejected all of the pending claims. Claims 1, 16, 17, and 19 have been amended, and no new matter was added by any of these amendments.

35 U.S.C. § 112, 1st Paragraph

Claims 1, 16, 17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Office Action found that the claims contain subject matter, which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

In response, independent Claims 1, 16, 17 and 19 have been amended to further clarify the claimed subject matter. For example, each of the claims have been amended to clarify that the rate of growth of the first degree of separation nodes is employed to adaptively determine a cut-off degree of separation for the cut-off radius. The adaptive/changing cut-off radius controls the “closeness” (degrees of separation) of which nodes can join the community based on the determined rate of growth.

35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph

Claims 1, 16, 17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Office Action stated that it was unclear as to whether degrees referred to temperature or separation.

In response, independent Claims 1, 16, 17, and 19 have been amended to clarify that the term “degree” more clearly relates to separation, not temperature.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ingerman et al. (US 2004/0255122 A1), hereinafter referred as Ingerman. The Office Action found that all of the elements of the claimed invention were disclosed by Ingerman.

In response, independent Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that an adaptive cut-off radius is determined for a community based in part on a rate of growth for membership in the community that is separated by a first degree of separation, wherein a cut-off degree of separation for the cut-off radius is adapted to be relatively large if the rate of growth is relatively high, and wherein the cut-off degree of separation for the cut-off radius is adapted to be relatively small if the rate of growth is relatively low.

Clearly, the cited reference does not teach or suggest the subject matter of amended Claim 1. In particular, the broad interpretation of the phrase “adaptive cut-off radius” relied upon by the Office Action is now moot in view of the instant amendment to Claim 1. Thus, for at least this reason, amended Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

Furthermore, independent Claims 16, 17, and 19 have been amended in a manner substantially similar to amended Claim 1, and they are also in condition for allowance for substantially the same reasons. Additionally, dependent Claims 2-15, and 18 are allowable for at least the same reasons as amended independent Claims 1 and 17, upon which they depend.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is now in condition for allowance. If any questions remain, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Dated: September 21, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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